



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE
Milwaukee County
CHRIS ABELE • COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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Milwaukee County DOT Wins National Safe and Sustainable Snowfighting Award

MILWAUKEE – Milwaukee County Executive Chris Abele today announced that the County's Department of Transportation Highway Division has won a Safe and Sustainable Snowfighting award from the Salt Institute for excellence in environmental consciousness and effective management in the storage of winter road salt.

Clear winter roads protect lives and commerce. Every winter, more than 116,000 Americans are injured and over 1,300 killed as a result of pavement that is snow, slush or ice covered, according to the federal government. But a study of highways in Snow Belt states showed that road salt reduces crashes by 88 percent.

When the direct and indirect impact of road shutdowns on the broader economy is factored in, road salt becomes even more valuable. A one-day major snowstorm can cost a state \$300-\$700 million in direct and indirect costs, lost commerce and productivity. In fact, deicing pays for itself within the first 25 minutes after the salt is spread—making proper salt storage and timely deicing a smart investment.

“We’re getting things done in Milwaukee County, and that’s due in large part to our hardworking County employees, like those at the Highway Management Division,” County Executive Chris Abele said. “Our roads are safer, we’re more efficient than ever, and we are working to implement sustainable environmental protections everywhere we can. I’m incredibly proud of the Highway Management Division for receiving this national recognition for their work and look forward to seeing what they are able to accomplish next for Milwaukee County.”

“Each winter snowfighters take incredible risks on icy roads, working long shifts to clear our roads of snow and ice and make them safe. They prioritize both public safety and the environment by effective practices that utilize just the right amount of salt at the right place and at the right time. The Safe and Sustainable Snowfighting Award represents the highest acclaim for public safety and

the environment. Recipients must meet or exceed nearly 70 different criteria covering storage, equipment, safety, environmental protection, and service.” said Salt Institute President Lori Roman.

About 26 million tons of deicing salt is applied to roadways in the U.S. last year according to the U.S. Geological Survey and another six million tons are spread in Canada. Having enough road salt on hand before storms hit requires advance planning and facilities that provide safe and efficient storage. Winners must also display proper maintenance and good housekeeping practices.

Only a handful of local agencies in the U.S. and Canada received this recognition. A complete list by state is available from the Salt Institute.

The Snowfighting award is the second national recognition in recent months for the Department of Transportation. The Fleet Management Division was awarded the “Fleet Top 100” honor for 2016 by The 100 Best Fleets, which recognizes the top fleet management teams in the Americas from more than 30,000 fleets.

The Fleet Management Division purchases and maintains vehicles and equipment used by Milwaukee County departments. Keys to this program include minimizing vehicle and equipment downtime, providing a preventative maintenance program, and educating users on safe operation and daily maintenance. This division provides three main functions: Equipment Repairs, Inventory Management, and Equipment Coordination.

As part of County Executive Abele’s launch of department-specific performance goals, the Department of Transportation and Fleet Management Division set out to achieve “Top Fleet” status, which is based on how a division is able to measure and track their success in meeting 12 specific criteria. Those criteria include accountability, collaboration, creativity, efficiency, staff development, and evidence of a high trust culture. The Division won the distinction in its first year applying, and aims to win again next year.

About Performance Management at Milwaukee County:

With an unrelenting focus on continuous improvement, Milwaukee County is well on its way to being a model government in the way that it manages its performance and delivers results to its citizens.

These disciplined efforts have already yielded significant improvements: the County’s Fleet Department has been recognized as one of the “100 Best Fleets in the Americas”; chronic homelessness in the County has dropped by over 70 percent; annual energy costs have declined by more than \$3 million since launching our Office of Sustainability in 2013, even accounting for seasonal swings in temperature, and the County is improving financial support for children in the poorest neighborhoods through our Child Support Services division setting new records for families served.

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